

Missouri Pumpkins

The pumpkin plant is native to North America. American Indians raised pumpkins long before the Pilgrims arrived. The Indians taught the settlers how to raise pumpkins and how to cook and eat them. Pumpkins were a good, healthy food source for the winter because they could be stored for several months. Sometimes farmers even fed pumpkins to their livestock.

The pumpkin plant produces a round or oval vegetable. You might be surprised to know that pumpkins are closely related to squash. Pumpkins have a hard outer shell with a coarse stringy pulp inside and many seeds in the center. Pumpkins come in many sizes, shapes and colors. Pumpkins usually weigh from 15 pounds to as much as 200 pounds in the giant varieties.

Some of Missouri's vegetable farmers raise bright orange pumpkins that are harvested in the fall. Pumpkins are very popular in the months of October and November. In Missouri the pumpkins are harvested in time for Halloween so we can enjoy jack-o'-lanterns. Sometime we also enjoy toasting pumpkin seeds for a delicious and nutritious snack. However, the favorite food use is baking pumpkin pies for Thanksgiving!

Pumpkin Math

A Missouri farmer plans to plant a pumpkin patch. Help her do some of the calculations necessary as she plans her patch.

1. She wants to produce 1,500 pumpkins. If she expects each pumpkin plant to produce 5 pumpkins, how many plants does she need to purchase?

Below is information from a packet of pumpkin seeds. Use the information on it to help her decide how to make her planting decisions.

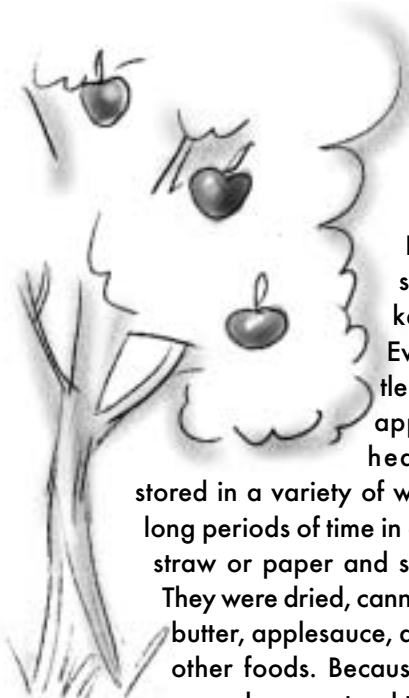
PUMPKIN—Jack O'Lantern—Weighs 20 - 25 pounds—Excellent for carving.				
Days to Germination	Depth to Plant	Seed Spacing	Row Spacing	Days to Harvest
12 days	1 inch	5 seeds every 6 feet	6 feet	110 days

Sow seeds in a sunny location after danger of spring frost. Thin seedlings when they are 2 or 3 inches in height, to have 3 plants per 6 feet. Make sure that plants are not crowded. Water generously.

Use the information in the above chart to answer the following questions.

- If she plants her pumpkin seeds on June 12, what day should they germinate?
- If she wants her pumpkins to be ready to harvest on October 10, when should she plant the seeds?
- Pumpkins are planted in groups called hills. If she plans on having three pumpkin plants per hill and plans to put her hills six feet apart. How many plants will she have in a row of pumpkin hills that is 50 feet long?





Missouri Apples

Have you ever heard the saying, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away"? Even the early American settlers knew how important the apple was in keeping them healthy. Apples could be stored in a variety of ways. Apples were kept for long periods of time in cellars or were wrapped in straw or paper and stored in dark, dry places. They were dried, canned, jellied, made into apple butter, applesauce, and baked in pies as well as other foods. Because of its texture, the apple even served as a natural toothbrush.

Apple drinks include juice or cider. Cider is made from apple juice. Most cider in Missouri has not been allowed to ferment, so it contains no alcohol. It is called sweet cider. Some has been fermented with yeasts that produce alcohol. It is called hard cider. Bacteria are then added to hard cider to make vinegar. Vinegar is used very widely in cooking. For example, pickles are usually made with apple cider vinegar.

Apples are from the rose family. The only apple native to North America is the crab apple. Early settlers brought cuttings and seeds with them to America and as the population moved westward, apple orchards were left behind. Cuttings are stems from apple trees that will sometimes take root and become a tree.

The apple legend most often repeated is that of "Johnny Appleseed". John Chapman was a Massachusetts man who became well known for planting

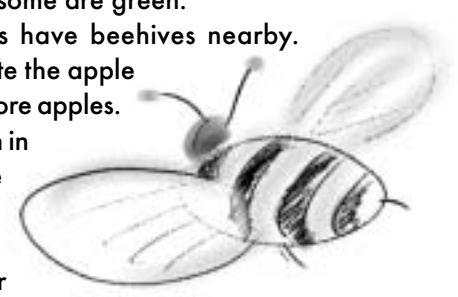
apple orchards throughout the Midwest, hence the name "Johnny Appleseed." The Native American Indians had also realized the value of the apple and had taken seeds from the east and planted them near their villages as they moved westward.

There are many different kinds of apples. Each kind is called a variety. Each variety is named either for the person who developed it or named after some unique characteristic. Can you name some varieties of apples? Some varieties are best for eating, while others are better for cooking. While most apples are red, some are yellow and some are green.

Many apple orchards have beehives nearby. Honeybees help to pollinate the apple blossoms so there will be more apples.

Missouri ranks fifteenth in the state rankings for apple production. This does not sound very high, but Missouri farmers produce over 40,000,000 pounds of apples each year for us to enjoy. All parts of our state have apple orchards that provide this delicious fresh fruit. Apple harvest starts in August with varieties such as the Jonathan, and continues into October with the Delicious varieties.

The list of apple treats seems endless - apple pie, apple turnovers, applesauce, caramel apples, apple cider, candied apples, bobbing for apples, apple butter, and even plain apples. What is your favorite apple treat?



A-P-P-L-E-S-A-U-C-E



Are you ready to make applesauce? Applesauce is a treat that most of us enjoy. It is made by grinding or chopping apples after they have been peeled, cored, and cooked. Since chopping up apples makes applesauce, let's take the word applesauce, chop it up, and see how many words you can make from the letters APPLESAUCE. To make it a bit more interesting, plural words that end in "s", don't count. So the words "Apple" and "Apples" only count as one word!

When you are finished, see who thought of the largest word (other than applesauce itself).

Who thought of the most three letter words?

Who made the most words from the letters in A-P-P-L-E-S-A-U-C-E?